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**“It’s us, you know, there’s a feeling of community”: Exploring notions of community in a consumer co-operative**

**Abstract:**

The notion of community infers unity and a source of moral obligations in an organisational ethic between individuals or groups. As such, a community, having a strong sense of collective identity, may foster collective action to promote social change for the betterment of society. This research critically explores notions of community through analysing discursive identity construction practices within a member owned urban consumer co-operative (CC) public house in the UK. A strong sense of community is an often-claimed CC characteristic. The paper’s main contributions stem from using the lens of identity work to critically unpack the notion of community through highlighting paradoxical tensions of community residing within CCs. The findings reveal that the notion of community may be illusory with counter-veiling forces, one that reflects a more traditional sense of connection, attachment and communion, and the other of boundaries, disconnection or division. As these repertoires collide, tensions are evident between the hegemonic discourse of neoliberal managerialism and that of democratic collective ownership. Despite these individual level tensions, communities may operate within boundaries enabling an organisational and societal ethic, beyond the individual.

**Keywords:** Consumer Co-operative, Community, Identity, Symbolic Boundaries, Tensions, Discourse Analysis, Public House.

## **“It’s us, you know, there’s a feeling of community”: Exploring notions of community in a consumer co-operative**

### **Introduction**

This paper, based on a case study of a member-owned urban consumer co-operative public house (or pub), explores the degree to which consumer co-operatives (hereafter CCs) can provide alternative bases to the economic role-based identity around which co-operative members’ “identities may be formed, claims articulated, values expressed, and action manifested” (Crane and Ruebottom 2011: 81). It does so by analysing the discursive identity construction practices of CC members, focusing on notions of community drawn upon in a series of interviews. It explores identity work in this context as the dynamic, interpersonal means through which we actively (re)create, maintain, adapt, repair, revise and present a sense of distinctive selfhood (Somers 1994). The study identifies and critically analyses a series of interpretive repertoires drawn on members’ accounts that can be categorised into two groups: one that reflects a sense of connection or attachment and one of disconnection or division, i.e. community and boundaries respectively.

Hence, the paper’s main contributions stem from using the lens of identity work to critically unpack some of the paradoxical tensions of community residing within CCs. First, we show how the notion of community, inferring a normative expectation of unity and a sense of togetherness in an organisational ethic, can be challenged through processes of categorisation as members of that community encounter tensions at points of intersection. Second, we provide new insights into how such tensions are manifested in a ‘community organisation’, in our case a consumer co-operative, at an individual level in the construction of members’ social identities revealing paradoxes of conflict as well as unity. Following from this, third, we show how such a community enterprise can exist and operate within boundaries, which

serve to demarcate their membership, and how such tensions, at an individual level, may be negotiated. Finally, in highlighting such paradoxes relevant to the notion of community, we consider the moral obligations to community, as an organisational and societal ethic beyond the individual.

The notion of community matters to scholars of organisational ethics. For instance, taking a global perspective, it has been argued that every individual inhabits two communities: the community of place where they are born and may live, and a larger community "which is truly great and truly common" with boundaries that are not subject to any conventional "measure" (Nussbaum 2010: 157). It is this second community that becomes "the source of moral obligations" (Janssens and Steyaert 2015: 106). Such an approach encompasses a version of cosmopolitanism which is seen as "a willingness to engage with the other" (Hannerz 1990: 239), emphasising an ethic which remains open-minded to difference and facilitates engagement "with multiple forms of being and identity" (Janssens and Steyaert 2015: 108). Such a perspective can be extended to decision-making by social entrepreneurs for whom acknowledging a fundamental responsibility towards the other (Clegg et al. 2007) renders ethical practices as more of a social affair than purely individual (Dey and Steyaert 2015). These conceptualisations suggest the importance to founder members of cooperative enterprises of understanding what they mean by community and how they construct their and others' identities.

Co-operatives, also known as Industrial and Provident Societies (I&PSs) or, more usually, 'co-ops', are a major business form across many countries and in many industries. They are defined as an "autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise" (ICA 2017). Co-ops are owned and run by and for their members and each member has an equal say in what the organisation does, typically abiding

to the principle of ‘one-member-one-vote’. Co-operative enterprises are “a unique business model, a hybrid that lies somewhere between the economically focused investor-owned firm and the socially focused not-for-profit business” (Mazzarol et al. 2014: 14).

While there are a number of forms of co-operative, CCs are doubly different from the norm as they are co-op enterprises owned and managed by consumers, as highlighted by Jussila et al. (2012). CCs have become increasingly popular with examples found in banking, insurance, retailing, utilities and health care ([www.ccw.coop](http://www.ccw.coop)). CCs represent interesting business contexts for study as the boundaries between consumers and organisations become fuzzier and “various forms of sharing economy and recent initiatives in collaborative consumption further amplify the relevance of a company form wherein the members have a dual role, acting both as owners and as customers” (Talonen et al. 2016: 142). However, CCs remain under examined, both in comparison to other forms of co-operative, and to other forms of business. As Fairbairn (2004: 47) notes, more in-depth studies of co-operative membership are needed in order to “unpack the actual connections or tensions in people’s attachments to the co-operatives they have voluntarily joined”.

Such attachments may come in the form of tangible co-op member benefits including the provision of services otherwise not available to general consumers, the creation of employment opportunities, an investment in community infrastructure or patronage refunds (Turner 2004). However, this may not necessarily always be the case. Indeed, as we shall see in the CC in our study, there is no real prospect of any financial return for the initial investment in a shareholding. Further, the CC model does not, by itself, guarantee that the co-op will flourish, nor does co-operation automatically create a new managerial functionality. Such forms of ownership can probably only ever hope to elicit a qualified change on the function of management. These potential tensions are likely to be reflected in the identity construction practices of co-op members as they struggle with the challenges of managing a

community owned enterprise in a market economy. Identity is often defined in terms of a local presence, but a co-op may also take on a broader community identity where it becomes integral to the community to which its members are (or perceive themselves to be) linked (Turner, 2004). Indeed, ‘Concern for Community’ is the 7th Rochdale Principle (the guidelines by which co-operatives operate) and states “co-operatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies approved by their members” (ICA, 2017). This begs our first research question: *What do consumer co-operative members mean by ‘community’?*

### **Background: Pub co-operatives in the UK**

We seek to explore these questions of identity and community by undertaking a situated study of a relatively new form of CC: the public house (hereafter ‘pub’). Pubs have existed for many years in the UK, evolving from serving a largely male, working class, beer-drinking clientele in the 1950s through to more modern facilities and entertainment centres appealing to multiple market sectors from the 1980s/1990s (Pratten 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). It has been suggested that the pub is a mid-way point between regulated and formal contexts such as work and more private and intimate inter-personal contexts such as the family (Smith 1983). In this hybrid position, pubs have been linked strongly with community by both managers/publicans and consumers, as a place for social interaction, stimulating and maintaining community cohesion, a place for networking and for playing a positive role in maintaining a social centre, and sometimes the last remaining service in the community and therefore with the potential to be the hub of that community (Cabras 2011; Plunkett Foundation 2015; 2017; Sandiford and Divers 2014). Additionally, Clarke et al. (1998: 138) argue that “the pub remains linked ‘organically’ to its use by its clientele”.

This community link remains in spite of the pressures felt by traditional pubs as articulated by the UK's Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA). CAMRA's discourse frequently invokes the notion of 'big business' enemies that must be battled to allow 'real' pubs to survive. These foes include supermarkets and so-called 'pubcos', i.e. large pub companies or brewing chains (Watson and Watson 2012: 694). While pubs have evolved to adapt to consumer demands, pub numbers in the UK are in decline. Andrews and Tuner (2012) note that there is probably no other sector of the UK hospitality industry that has undergone such a long and sustained period of change, due to the effects of legislation, recession, the credit crunch, and rising costs (Cabras 2011). Pub closures have been linked with community erosion (Sandiford and Divers 2014) and, consequently the role of pubs as part of communities and as a catalyst for social sustainability has gained more attention. Indeed, research has highlighted concerns for not only the effect on communities from pub decline but on the wider cultural landscape (Andrews and Turner 2012).

In response to pub closures and the pressure from pubcos, a number of communities have sought to save or rejuvenate their local pub through running it as a CC (Sandiford and Divers 2014). Pubs seem particularly suited to the co-operative form because of their role as a traditional space for social aggregation and communal engagement (Cabras, 2011), reflecting the significance of community as a characteristic of co-operatives more widely (Fairburn 2004). This has been noticeable in research conducted into pubs in more isolated, rural communities (Cabras, 2011). Such studies have also highlighted that a high level of community cohesion is a necessity for co-operatives to work and that a high level of citizenship is vital<sup>1</sup>. Studies of larger cooperatives in Finland have noted the role of shared

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<sup>1</sup> For example see Enspiral (A New Zealand based co-operative) <https://www.shareable.net/blog/enspiral-changing-the-way-social-entrepreneurs-do-business>.

goals, values and sense of community as factors in encouraging members to participate further once they are a member (Birchall and Simmons 2004).

The first rural example of a pub co-operative in the UK was the *Tafarn y Fic* in Llithfaen opening in 1988, with the first urban example being the *Star Inn* in Salford set up in 2010 (Plunkett Foundation, 2015). At the end of 2016, 46 co-operative pubs were in operation in the UK up from 10 in 2011 (Plunkett Foundation 2017). The Plunkett Foundation (a foundation which supports “people, predominantly in rural areas, to set up and run life-changing community co-operatives” <https://www.plunkett.co.uk/about-us>) notes the newness of the co-op pub sector but also highlights that common approaches are starting to emerge, particularly with regards to legal structure and the success of community share issues to raise finance. Policy makers have also noted the potential of co-operative pubs, providing an increasing number of financial help schemes for people to set up pub CCs run through the Plunkett Foundation (Cabras 2011) as well as the introduction of the Localism Act in 2011 allowing communities to register their pubs as Assets of Community Value (Plunkett Foundation, 2017).

Furthermore, the mainstream UK media have embraced the newsworthy nature of stories of rural ‘villagers’ who have ‘saved their pub’ (these terms being commonly found in accompanying headlines). Witness these quotes from two separate articles in the UK national press, in the *Mirror* (2014) and the *Telegraph* (2013) respectively:

“It's much more than a pub, it's the hub of our village... It's at the centre of everything... People live in villages because they want to be part of a tightly knit community, to form bonds. Without any hub, how is that possible? ... That is why pubs are important. It's not about drinking, it's about having a heart in your community.”



“We didn't buy shares for profit, it was for the sense of community – we didn't want to lose the pub. There's nothing here apart from the church and village hall... There's been a real sense of community and people wanting to get involved. There's a real feeling the pub is theirs and they want to come here and enjoy it.”

The salience of a community spirit that appears to be centred on the notion of ‘the pub as hub’ is clear for these speakers, who are both members of their CCs. In these villages, the pub is claimed to be essential for the social sustainability of the community. Indeed, the Plunkett Foundation notes the importance of community co-operatives in tackling isolation, loneliness and poverty. The somewhat hagiographic claims made for rural pubs, often driven by a strong desire to halt the decline of relatively isolated villages, makes us wonder whether the same ostensible sense of community cohesion can be found for pubs in urban locales. Thus, our second research question asks: *How do notions of community manifest themselves amongst members/owners of an urban CC pub?*

### **Conceptualisations of community**

Fairbairn (2004) notes that leaders and analysts of the co-operative sector often refer to the concept of community as a characteristic of co-operatives as well as a setting within which co-operatives are rooted. Yet, descriptions of community can be somewhat indiscriminating. For instance, for Finnis (1980:136), a community is “a form of unifying relationship between human beings”. However, what a ‘community’ means to its members is not straightforward, as communities may consist of individual citizens or groups of citizens organized to represent a community's shared interests (Crane et al. 2004). Communities of interest are advocacy groups that share a common purpose driven by a particular agenda (Dunham et al. 2006). These shared interests may inspire social action, as suggested by Delanty (2003:71) who

argues “community is communicative in the sense of being formed in collective action based on place... local communities can serve as important vehicles for the expression of moral recognition and the building of personal identities”. In a similar vein but somewhat more individualistically, Lichterman (1996) argues that commitment and a shared respect for individual inspiration can be a uniting and driving force for activists from diverse backgrounds working together to promote social change. He suggests personal fulfilment arises out of group communal activity, which produces a strong sense of identity. Similarly, Melé (2012) stresses the significance of relationships arising from unity for common action.

So how might we try to understand these community relationships? In developing definitions of community, scholars (e.g. Bowen et al. 2011; Calvano 2008; Dunham et al. 2006; Lee and Newby 1983) tend to agree that communities can be characterized by three factors: geography, interaction and identity. A geographical perspective represents people residing within the same geographic region, but does not necessarily imply any interaction among them. In contrast, communities characterised by regular interaction represent a set of social relationships that may not always be place based. Communities distinguished primarily by identity share a sense of belonging, often built upon a shared set of beliefs, values or experiences; however, the individuals may not live within the same locale. The term community has often had positive connotations, as in the phrases ‘a sense of community’ or ‘community spirit’. It is thus not only descriptive, but also normative and ideological (Jary and Jary 1999: 100). Although virtual communities and communities of practice also pertain to this discussion (Dunham et al. 2006) they are not so relevant to our current study’s pub context.

We can thus begin to see how we might conceptualise community and, further, what it may mean to CC members. As Smith (2001) confirms, in addition to understandings of community that are underpinned by place (or locality) and interaction, and those intentional communities that can arise when people share a common interest, a further understanding of community can be added – that of attachment, which in its strongest form might be thought of as ‘communion’ – where members may have a sense of shared identity (Wilmott 1989). If we conceive of such collectives as ‘communities of meaning’ then, after Cohen (1985: 118), we can argue that “people construct community symbolically, making it a resource and repository of meaning, and a referent of their identity”.

#### *Identity work in relation to communities*

As part of this construction process, ‘identity work’ describes how people seek to exert agency, shaping a sense of who they are, reflecting on how they act whilst negotiating the affirmation and acceptance of their sense of identity by others (Alvesson et al. 2008). Identity work has been used in organisation studies as a useful lens through which to explore positions of change or ambiguity for both individuals and enterprises. For instance, Cunha et al. (2010) note the challenges that arise in organisations as struggles occur between internal communities over ethical norms. Tensions, particularly in terms of structure and resistance to that structure, are also found by Meira (2014) in an organisation following its take-over by employees. Communities built on identity thus play an increasingly important role in the business world (Dunham et al. 2006). Within this world, a firm or organisation can be considered a community comprising “a group of people with common characteristics or beliefs, or who are interconnected, or a group organized around common values and with certain social cohesion” (Melé 2012: 92). This suggests a host of ways in which co-operative members can supposedly find common ground and social characteristics with which they can

identify. Community can be evoked when there are not just mutual relationships between individuals but where people “form a unity and shape a ‘we’” (Stein 1998: 248). Moreover, one may think of a collective identity as a sense of “we-ness” (Saunders 2008: 232) where solidarity is a potential outcome.

Related to ideas of ‘we-ness’ and capturing the idea of communion, discourses surrounding community frequently evoke utopian ideals (Bauman 1976). When social actors seek belonging and attachment in an unpredictable world where market ideologies have become dominant, it has been argued that they are likely to look fondly at the notion of community, viewing it as the “kind of world which is not, regrettably, available to us – but which we would dearly love to inhabit and which we hope to repossess” (Bauman 2001: 3). Jacobsen (2004) compares Bauman's (1976) notions of utopia, in its capacity for transcendence, possibility and change as opposed to order, rigidity and structure, with Turner's (1969) concept of *communitas*. This latter term refers to more than just a locality or a community of individuals with a shared interest; “it is a more or less undifferentiated community of equals in which individuals commune with each other in a relatively unstructured and egalitarian way” (Wallace 2006: 220). Utopianism and *communitas* share some similarities as “sources of togetherness which bring forth human spontaneity, self-constitution, experimentation and transformation” (Jacobsen 2004: 66). This sense of togetherness is captured in Wallace's (2006: 222) evocation of the “predominantly white middle-aged men” who volunteer to work in railway preservation societies and who are bound by “the unspoken fetish of belonging to the community” (see also Melé's (2012: 92) sense of ‘fellowship’).

However, the connections apparently afforded by *communitas* may not persist over time. Despite the essentially utopian nature of this space where homogeneity and unity supposedly

prevail (Turner and Turner 1978), *communitas* can allow social structure to reassert itself, especially when people exhibit status-seeking behaviour (Tumbat and Belk 2011). Such actions can undermine the use of a shallow organisational structure and clear systems of accountability thought to be essential in businesses pursuing a strong social purpose (Grassl 2011). This can present a particular challenge for the enactment of identity as actors may have to re-position their ‘selves’ across different, socially constructed divides within a business in such a way that their identity is meaningful for themselves and for what they regard as their community.

#### *Tensions in community-related identity work*

Such tensions can reflect, and indeed impact upon, peoples’ self-identity (their own idea of who they are) and their social-identity (the idea of that individual in external discourses and cultures) (Watson 2009). Intensified identity work may arise from relations with others both ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ the enterprise that challenge self-understandings. A key theme when investigating individual identities is therefore the discursive separation of self from other, which illustrates how “the process by which we come to understand who we are is intimately connected to notions of who we are not and, by implication, who others are (and are not)” (Ybema et al. 2009: 306). Fairburn (2004) notes, within the co-op literature, that the extent of member loyalty and the degree of homogeneity or heterogeneity of members can be important. Therefore, constructions of self and others are likely to be central to how CC members make sense of their community (or communities). Often oscillating between an inclusive and an exclusive ‘us’, individuals can articulate embracing yet distinctive identities vis-à-vis other social actors, both within and without the organisation’s boundaries (Ellis and Ybema 2010).

Where tensions or “mutually antagonistic” divergences between social-identities develop, the contradictions and fragility inherent in identity work will likely increase (Clarke et al. 2009: 323) and we may see the negotiation of hybrid identities. Individuals identify particular “facets of identity” (Van Laer and Janssens 2014: 188) as salient to these negotiations. Valued social-identity elements can be retained while other elements are separated out through a process of dis-identification or split-identification (Gutierrez et al. 2010). Choices around adopting identity facets that include conflicting dimensions can create latent tensions such as those that persist between creative and commercial roles in arts organisations (Beech et al. 2012).

Moreover, hybridization may be understood in relation to intersectionality, “highlighting individuals’ locations across a multiplicity of identity dimensions” (Atewologun et al. 2016: 225). Individuals are likely to draw upon multiple social-identities given “the intersectional nature of identity – that men are not just men but are immersed in social class relations, racialized and so on” (Wetherell and Edley 2014: 361). A key question within hybrid identity work is the extent of coherence between different social-identities at locations where they intersect (Jain et al. 2009). This relates to the relative dominance of different social-identities in hybrid identity work and is recognised in notions of a focal self (Jain et al. 2009) and the degree of conformity to the dominant discourse (Essers and Benschop 2007). Some scholars hint at the possibility of balance between “difference and sameness” such that identities become “neither one nor the other” (Van Laer and Janssens 2014: 193). There is the suggestion that, in such discursive practices, people can draw on “different and potentially conflicting dimensions that are not normally expected to go together” (Golden-Biddle and Rao 1997: 594).

Watson and Watson (2012: 688) discuss notions of identity work set in the context of pubs. They posit “three levels of social life”: the societal level such as the marketplace, the

intermediate level such as organisations like pubs, and the individual level. It is at this micro, third level where we encounter identity work as people attempt to fashion a sense of ‘who they are’. Such identity work will often embrace the societal and intermediate levels too, for example in the degree to which an individual accepts a capitalist view of business or ‘buys into’ the values of the organisations of which they are members. Regarding the latter, the notion of organisational identification refers to “the extent to which an organisation defines the self and the individual’s view of the world, and involves evaluation of the meaning of organisational membership in which values and emotions figure” (Brown 2017: 299). For instance, Kenny (2010) illustrates how strong organisational identification is enacted by demonstrating fluency in an organisation's ideology through discourses centred on ‘ethical living’ in a small charitable organisation.

Looking at our CC pub scenario, co-operative members may view their participation as a means of constructing their self-identity while also negotiating the cultivation of a collectively shared identity which is affirmed in two ways. First, identification with the social group to which they belong and second, differentiation from outsiders to the group (Papaoikonomou et al. 2012), even though these outsiders may ostensibly be members of the same organisation. Nevertheless, even though the character of being ‘a co-operative’ shapes the experience and the identities of members, they may lack the language to put “the co-operative difference” into words (Fairbairn 2004: 29). Critical discourse analysis, however, can potentially give a voice to all a community’s stakeholders (Dunn and Eble 2015).

Moreover, little research exists into the experiential aspects of participation in a CC or on the meanings attached to member participation as a result of this experience (Papaoikonomou et al. 2012). Significantly, Lamont (1992) argues in favour of an inductive, interview based approach to the study of symbolic boundaries to assess their relative importance across group contexts; she thereby supports the methodological approach we have taken in the current

study. That an empirical gap in our knowledge exists is further supported by the scarcity of case studies that provide “perspectives on alternative modes of organising” in the tangential arena of organisation studies (Mangan 2009: 96).

## **Methods**

Qualitative methods were adopted that was underpinned by an interpretive approach to social science, thereby facilitating a more contextual understanding of business practice and social sustainability from the perspective of the “pluralistic reality of the actors themselves” (Reinecke et al. 2016: xiv). Additionally, Watson and Watson (2012) note that the pub world is a particularly narrative-oriented one, again supporting the qualitative approach. Given the emergent nature of the study, this stance allowed us to more reflexively focus, where necessary, on unanticipated findings that might, at first examination, appear puzzling.

The primary data collection was centred on a single co-operative pub in the urban north of England which had been running in this form for over a year. The CC is owned by its members (approximately 200 at any one time), who elect a board (10 people) from the membership who in turn deal with strategic decisions about the pub on behalf of members. This mirrors the majority of UK CC pubs where the average membership is 207 (Plunkett Foundation, 2017). Like about a quarter of these CCs, the co-op does not own the pub premises but rents from a pubco. The day-to-day running of the pub is done by a live-in manager who manages a team of paid part-time workers (some CC pubs are run by volunteers from the membership but this is not the case here). Decisions are generally made at the board and manager level with input from members at two open membership meetings a year (and through ad hoc contact between these parties).



Empirically, our study draws on data from a series of in-depth semi-structured interviews with co-op members, some of whom were also board members. In all, 37 people were interviewed, comprising 28 males and 9 female participants (see Table 1 for details) resulting in 891 pages of transcription. All members who took part as participants were founder members of the co-operative and had been members since the pub became a cooperative. The male/female balance is broadly reflective of the co-operative membership at the time of the study (56 females and 130 males). The youngest respondent was 29, the oldest 83. Face-to-face interviews took place mostly in the city where the pub is located (but a few were done by telephone with members who did not live locally) between April and July 2014. The shortest interview lasted 25 minutes, and the longest 1 hour 20 minutes. Questions asked in these interactions included those which explored peoples' general pub consumption behaviours; motivations for becoming involved in the co-op; experiences of being a member; and what people felt they had in common with other members. Interviews were audio recorded and professionally transcribed.

#### INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Our analysis of the resulting transcripts is founded on the identification of 'interpretative repertoires' (Potter and Wetherell 1987) that provide people with discursive resources (clusters of terms, descriptions and figure of speech) that they can use to construct versions of reality. Analysis was a multi-stage "iterative process in which ideas were used to make sense of data, and data used to change ideas" (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p.158). Prior conceptualisations of community informed an etic side to our analysis where the coding of interview texts to repertoires was guided by a protocol based in part on the literature; but we

were driven primarily by the emic responses, that is, situated knowledge of members (Reinecke et al. 2016). For outcomes of this process and the resultant codes and sub-codes of notions of community, boundaries and tensions see tables 2-4. We thus used a combination of a priori codes from the literature and in vivo codes derived from the data to frame our analysis. A high level of inter-coder reliability emerged as the coding process of the transcripts was undertaken by all four authors independently. Additionally, one of the authors who lives close to the pub and is thus familiar with the local environment and case organisation, was a co-op member (and continues to be a member) through which participant access was voluntarily secured. All potential participants were assured of their anonymity (by name) as part of the research process<sup>2</sup> denoted as P1, P2 and so forth in the subsequent findings and analysis. Based on their level of access to the co-op membership, that member of the research team completed all of the interviews, during and after which any participant was free to withdraw from the process or retract their interview. In comparison, the other authors remained more distant. The four authors reviewed transcripts and codes in group discussion choosing or rejecting data based upon our ‘interpretive sensitivities’ (Phillips & Hardy, 2002, p. 75). This meant that a healthy degree of interpretive tension existed, allowing our interpretations to be challenged and debated. This continued until we felt data saturation had been reached. Moreover, we moved beyond merely an impressionist view of the data by plotting the detailed patterns of occurrence of each interpretative repertoire. In doing so, we have endeavoured to transparently show how our theorizations are “embedded in empirical material” (Reinecke et al. 2016: xvii).

In discourse analysis, it is not just the identification of particular terms and linguistic tools that is important; what speakers do with language is also crucial (Wood and Kroger 2000).

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<sup>2</sup> As part of this anonymity, and in securing access to the co-operative members, the name of the pub is not disclosed.

Through discourse, social actors constitute knowledge, situations, social roles as well as identities and interpersonal relations (de Cillia et al. 1999). Consequently, as we discuss each repertoire in turn, we highlight a variety of self-identity and community constructing practices within members' accounts of CC-related issues. Like Whittle and Mueller (2010: 418), we take the view that motives should be viewed as a topic for analysis rather than merely a resource for explanation. Thus, peoples' claimed interests and motives are not a fixed set of forces that shape how discourse is used but, rather, "language is the primary medium through which 'interests' are accounted for, constructed and managed". This means that, while the fact that particular repertoires are invoked by speakers is of great interest, equally significant in our analysis is what the resulting discourses achieve for the management of stake (and indeed status) in the CC.

## **Findings and Analysis**

Here we analyse the meanings that appear to be being constructed by participants in the use of certain interpretative repertoires, as well their patterns of occurrence in members' talk. The repertoires are divided into two groups: one that reflects a sense of connection or attachment and one of disconnection or division, i.e. community and boundaries respectively. We present some stanzas ("sets of lines about a single minimal topic, organised ... syntactically so as to hang together" (Gee 1996: 94)) of talk in tables for both broad groups of repertoires. In the spirit of 'showing' as well as 'telling' (Reinecke et al. 2016), after commenting on the lexical content of each repertoire and how they are being used to achieve particular social constructions, we also provide detailed expansion analyses of rich exemplar stanzas that illustrate typical discursive practices found in participants' accounts of their CC membership experiences. As we do so, we highlight the identity work that appears to be taking place,

mainly in terms of members' self-identity but also at the organisational (intermediate) level of the pub and, where relevant, the wider societal level (Watson and Watson 2012).

*(a) Notions of community*

Firstly, and stemming from accounts of peoples' motivations to join the CC, we see a range of notions of community, constructed by repertoires of place, common interest and communion, as summarised in Table 2. The first of these constructs is founded on the pub's locality, e.g. *It's a local pub for locals* (P3). Two types of common interest can be identified: the first constructs the motivation to join from people sharing the aim of preserving the pub in its current form (being *amongst others who have saved it*, P27); the second from people holding an anti 'big brewery' view (*they're just asset strippers*, P11). The notion of community as communion constructs member's motivation as based on a strong attachment where they seem to have a sense of shared identity, e.g. *it's us, you know, there's a feeling of community*, P5.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

While their use by participants can overlap (as seen in the expansion analysis below), the table shows the overall pattern of occurrence of each repertoire. Constructions of community as place and of sharing the common interests of preservation or anti-corporatism are commonplace and found in the majority of interviews, but an understanding of community as communion is even more widely evoked as motivation. The pattern of occurrence for community repertoires in general shows little variation across the participants (as classified in Table 1), suggesting that the use of such language is equally prevalent amongst most CC members.

To shed further light on the sorts of mean-making taking place in members' discourse, an exemplar stanza of community-orientated talk is analysed below in greater detail.

*“I just think it’s a great thing, that the cooperative movement is really important, and generally speaking anything that, any small step that the community can take to sort of take back its own culture is a really important thing too,.....and it’s really important to encourage any effort on those lines. And I just, I love this place, and the idea of having a stake in it was such an exciting, it felt completely different, the first drink that I had in here after getting the shares, when it was all done, to feel like such a bit of it is sort of in your hands. You know, there really is, I suppose I was thinking about the actual word ‘cooperative’ in that sense of ownership in you’re a co-operator, rather than just meaning you get along with the people. It’s actually you’re part of operating something, rather than just being a consumer of it, and I think that’s really important.”*

The speaker, a 35 year old man (P9), discursively positions himself by drawing on a variety of meanings of community. He begins by using a repertoire of communion built on a belief in the ‘importance’ of *the cooperative movement* and notions of community *culture* which he asserts one should be *a part of*. As he does so, he also draws on a repertoire of common interest represented by what seems to be anti-capitalist rhetoric about *the community* ‘taking back’ *its own culture*. The statement about ‘loving’ *this place* then arguably draws on a meaning of community as locality, as well as being a personal connection to the place. Finally, the speaker utilises a repertoire of communion once again as he talks of the ‘excitement’ and ‘feelings’ associated with being *a co-operator (...)* *rather than just being a consumer*. Interestingly, at this point in his account he also suggests a need for management (see Discussion), however nebulous, via the words *operating something*.

In terms of identity construction, at the individual level this participant works discursively to present himself as a passionate (for instance in the repetition of *really important*) yet reflective (*I think; I suppose I was thinking about*) advocate of community in all its meanings

and, seemingly, of *communitas*. The lack of the pronoun ‘we’ in his narrative, however, may be telling: this account is much more about him (*I, you* – in this case the second person is almost certainly the speaker himself) and his partial *ownership* of an enterprise that *is sort of in your hands*, than it is about his ‘co-operators’ or *just meaning you get along with the people*. At the organisational level, the pub’s identity is given a sense of place (literally *this place; in here*), but otherwise is rather vague (*something*). Moreover, the phrases *take back its own culture* and *the first drink that I had in here after getting the shares, when it was all done* hint at the changes the enterprise must have gone (or be going) through, thus projecting the sense of a somewhat discombobulating state.

*(b) Construction of boundaries*

In addition to constructions of community, however, we also find boundaries being discursively erected and manifested in participants’ accounts. These are shown in Table 3 in terms of repertoires that claim differences in values amongst members, differences between social categories, hierarchies within the CC (typically due to the perceived power of board members) and members versus non-member consumers. While not as widespread as community repertoires, the presence of boundary repertoires in members’ talk acknowledges some divisions. Thus, the table illustrates how the first of these repertoires constructs boundaries within CC membership predicated on different values, e.g. *you shouldn’t have to... buy from the right organic shops... to be part of [Pub Name]*, P8; and, somewhat relatedly, the second repertoire constructs boundaries predicated on social categories, e.g. *there’s a lot of middle class academic people in there*, P32. Third, indicating a more organisationally-driven set of boundaries, the ‘hierarchies’ repertoire suggests divisions exist between board members and non-board members (*it’s like us and them at meetings*, P13). Finally, we find boundaries constructed between CC members and non-members or consumers (*how many of these other people here are actually members...?* P34).

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

The two most commonly occurring repertoires in this group are those of boundaries between values and between membership hierarchies. The salience of all these repertoires appears similar for most CC members in our sample.

Again, an exemplar stanza of such boundary-constructing talk is subjected to an expansion analysis below to unpack the meanings which appear to underpin participants' discourse.

*“... [the city district] as a whole I think is quite a sort of lefty, quite hippy-ish sort of community, and I don't necessarily put myself in that sort of category. I mean a lot of them, I mean I've got an allotment and a lot of them like looking after themselves and home grown stuff, and yes I like that as well. But a lot of them, this is a huge generalisation, a lot of them don't have cars, they have bicycles and things. And you see these terrifying baby bicycles with children in the back, and you think, 'Oh my god!' (...) No, I don't sort of, not a right wing person by any means politically, but I think I'm more centre than a lot of the people are who come here. I mean all that about the sign, they want to, 'Oh no, we don't want to have [Pub Name] on it with the cross on it because it has connotations for royalty and religion'. What? It's a traditional pub sign!”*

In this case, the speaker is P6, a 52 year old woman, living locally. We can see some quite distinct boundaries being discursively constructed around, and between, different members of the CC, in relation to which the speaker simultaneously attempts to position herself. Thus, the use of language in the erection of notional boundaries predicated on values and social categories, and in the construction of a self-identity, is necessarily considered together in the analysis that follows.

The participant begins by ‘categorising’ the majority (*as a whole*) of the local district as a *lefty, quite hippy-ish sort of community*, and one that she is not part of, even though she also feels she has to explain that she too has *got an allotment*, perhaps suggesting that this has some similarities, if only outwardly, with the ‘hippy left’. This discursive move creates the impression that the difference between her and other members is not so great after all as well as, crucially, allowing her to offer a legitimate evaluation of *them*. She justifies her claims about a large section of the community (note the repetition of *a lot of them*) by evoking the vivid example of *these terrifying baby bicycles* and how scared ‘seeing’ these *things* (a word suggesting something alien) makes (normal?) people (*you*) feel. However, her acknowledgment that she is making *a huge generalisation* indicates that she is somewhat cautious in her othering of fellow members. Moreover, she often qualifies her statements with phrases like *sort of, I don’t necessarily* and *I mean*, thereby suggesting she does not want appear too extreme in her characterization of the neighbourhood. This hybrid self-positioning continues as she struggles to articulate her ‘political’ stance (*No, I don’t sort of, not a right wing person by any means*) but still uses a metaphorical continuum (*lefty; centre; right*) to highlight the difference between her and *a lot of the people (...) who come here*.

She then evokes a further example to support her claims: i.e. by describing what has apparently been a contentious and, in her view, foolish (*What?*) debate (*all that*) about the *pub sign*. Here, differences are plotted by contrasting the secular and republican views of some members (*they*) with her *traditional* perspective. P6’s self-identity is thereby constructed as part of a dissenting minority (perhaps an ‘us’ captured in the use of *you* by this speaker) that has different values (but, importantly, not too different thus legitimating her account) from the majority of community stakeholders (*them*). In addition, organisationally, the pub’s identity is not resolved in this account, where it remains an enterprise suspended between a form of modernity and tradition, i.e. in a state of transition.



## Discussion

We have shown that the talk of CC members is replete with discourses that convey, on one hand, a sense of connection or attachment and, on the other, one of disconnection or division. Given the two contrasting sets of repertoires that populate this talk, our findings prompt us to return to the interview transcripts to see if we can make more sense of what it means to participate in an urban CC pub. This reveals a further set of discursive tensions that seem to reflect the variety of motives offered for membership, especially the claimed salience for so many participants of the ‘community as communion’ repertoire; and how these appear to be undermined by the boundaries constructed between the different values and social categories of members and also those between board and non-board members.

As a result, tensions are revealed as members wrestle with repertoires that assert the need for ‘management’ as well as attempting to reconcile or balance social objectives built on community alongside those founded on commercial ‘reality’, as shown in Table 4. Here we see, first, discursive struggles between trying to run the CC under utopian, non-hierarchical, transparent ideals of *communitas* versus a more traditional managerialism (*as the board in control they have... to act and to make decisions but... you’d want a consensus*, p8); and second, tensions between articulating aims for the enterprise based on notions of community set against those based on commerce or the marketplace (*if it’s not able to be a profitable... pub then we can’t serve any of the other community objectives*, P22).

INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

The overall patterns of occurrence for both types of tension appear to be broadly similar, with each being commonplace. Thus, the prevalence of discourse indicating contested meanings is

quite high amongst all participants, both in the case of the ‘management’ repertoire and regarding the reconciliation of objectives.

To support these claims of discursive tensions, we offer a final exemplar stanza to be discussed in more detail.

P10: “*And some things are difficult.*”

Interviewer: “*Yeah, it’s a difficult thing to know where that is. Were you on the board when the debate about minimum staff wage levels came up?*”

P10: “*Yes, and I was very keen for that, I thought it was a good idea. But obviously then you have to make sure we’re making enough money. So there’s always kind of trade-offs with those kind of decisions, it’s not just as clear cut as, ‘Yes, we should pay staff as much as we can’, but we’ve got to balance that against other things. But then that’s when having people like Fred [a pseudonym- the board member who ‘looks after’ finances, in another member’s words] to do the numbers come in handy.*”

Here, the speaker (P10), a 29 year old man who is also a board member, responds to a prompt from the interviewer. In an attempt to elicit more information from the participant following his acknowledgment that *some things are difficult*, the interviewer draws on what has apparently been a contentious issue (a specific *difficult thing*) for the CC, i.e. that of a paying a minimum wage to pub staff, to frame her question. P10 confirms his board position and then utilises what we might term a ‘commerce vs. community’ repertoire as he contrasts the *good idea* of the wage with the ‘obvious’ need to make *enough money*. He sets this up explicitly as a *trade-off* (a classic business-based metaphor) and, later in the same sentence, as having to *balance* two seemingly equally legitimate objectives: the social imperative to *pay staff as much as we can* and the expectation that the enterprise (*we’ve got to*) weighs this against *other things*. That these ‘things’ are commercial considerations is confirmed when

P10 evokes a third party, Fred, who can *do the numbers* that might support any such *decisions*.

In doing so, the speaker draws upon a further repertoire that asserts the need for some sort of management structure or approach to run the CC. Thus the board member who *looks after* the finances is necessary (*he comes in handy*); there are employment-based/work relationships within the enterprise (*we should pay staff*); and it seems as though the board has the authority and expertise to make appropriate *decisions*.

The interaction serves to position the speaker as a socially aware individual (*I was very keen for that, I thought it was a good idea*) but also as a board member with *difficult* financial responsibilities (*you have to make sure*) and as an actor embedded within the CC (*we're making...*). This collective entity is then evoked in the rest of the participant's account as the pronoun *we* appears repeatedly (although it is not certain whether it is we the board or we the CC). This discursive move constructs the organisation (and its members), and not just the speaker, as a reflective enterprise, capable of voicing concerns over wages (note the reported speech with no clear origin) yet 'balancing' these ideals against commercial survival. That a potentially polarising debate appears to have taken place within the CC suggests that some individuals may find themselves in uncertain positions as they attempt to resolve such tensions.

The notion of community infers unity and a source of moral obligations in an organisational ethic between individuals or groups. For example, Tencati and Zsolnai (2009) advocate a 'collaborative strategy' as a way of doing business where organisations, such as co-ops, seek to balance sustainable environmental, social and monetary values to build long-term mutually beneficial relationships with all stakeholders including members, employees, consumers, suppliers and the community/civil society. Co-ops are also typically characterized in the

literature as comprising persons ‘united voluntarily’ (ICA 2017), with a ‘sense of community’ existing amongst co-op members (Birchall and Simmons 2004) and expectations of a strong ‘community spirit’ (Jary and Jary 1999) and high levels of ‘togetherness’ (Jacobsen 2004).

However, in contrast to these studies, our study indicates that there can be “tensions, contradictions and interrelationships between enterprise and community service discourses” (Mangan 2009: 96) within co-operatives, even those that are classified as consumer CCs. This delicate balancing act between profit-seeking and social orientation is also highlighted by Sabadoz (2011). Moreover, our case provides vivid illustrations of the tensions which can exist between the different social groupings that comprise a community enterprise (Tracey 2005). It supports Bertland’s (2011:1) claim, after Nancy (1991), that individuals within a community “will always have gaps between them”. Indeed, Brent (2004: 214) observes that “community activity creates conflict and division” between members despite being partly premised on notions of cooperation and mutuality.

Thus, even though a variety of communities are captured by our first set of connective interpretive repertoires (as per Table 2), perhaps these divisions not should surprise us too much: within some social movements there can be “an encompassing collective identity characterised by high levels of commitment from activists” who may “develop a cliquey and exclusive culture” (Saunders 2008: 228), thereby creating boundaries and undermining expectations of *communitas*.

By drawing on such boundaries, people in a range of social strata can symbolically construct and reinforce their social positions (Yodanis 2002), thus contributing to their identity work through the display of values and beliefs that may symbolise a particular class. As our second set of more divisory interpretive repertoires shows (see Table 3), such positioning emerges

quite often in our participants' discourse. So to what social use might this type of talk be being put? Lamont and Molnar (2002: 168) distinguish between symbolic and social boundaries: the former are "conceptual distinctions made by social actors to categorise objects, people (and) practices... Symbolic boundaries also separate people into groups and generate feelings of similarity and group membership". If symbolic boundaries are broadly agreed upon they can take on a constraining character which serves to pattern social interaction; only then can they become social boundaries. It thus seems as though social boundaries are being erected within the community enterprise through the symbolic boundary work of a number of the CC's members.

After Bourdieu, Lamont (1992) demonstrates the importance of moral symbolic boundaries, especially within the middle classes. People are thought to draw moral boundaries when they feel superior to others who they perceive to have low moral standards, or when they criticise others for being selfish (Lamont et al. 1996). Intriguingly, some of our participants do not seem to be too concerned by this status-seeking othering, since selfish motives or justifications are not always elided in their identity work. This runs counter to the expectation that people will try to portray themselves as morally superior in a bid to maintain their social status (Mueller and Whittle 2012). Instead, some members openly position themselves in contrast to what they see as a stereotypical middle class, possibly left-wing co-op member or founder, even if this discourse may not necessarily construct their own self-identity in terms of shared values within the CC. Yet all our participants have a financial stake in the pub, and most of them claim to regularly drink there, so there is clearly a degree of common ground between them, seemingly predicated on at least one of the repertoires of community that we have identified in our analysis: place, common interest and/or communion. No wonder, then, that it can be so difficult to understand peoples' motives for joining a co-operative and how these relate to the sustainability of such an enterprise and the community in which it sits.

## **Conclusions, Contributions and Future Research**

We have shown the salience for consumer co-operative (CC) members of identity work and symbolic boundaries in relation to a variety of notions of community. The findings illustrate the enactment of self-identity at an individual level (Watson 2009) and illuminate the ‘self-making process’ in what is undoubtedly a paradoxical organisational context (cf. Watson and Watson 2012) where tensions are evident between the hegemonic discourse of neoliberal managerialism and that of democratic collective ownership. Our analysis captures the paradox of ‘community’ as it is evoked in people’s identity work such that “community’s main import is the way it affects relationships and lives of the people taking part, and the relationships they have with other people and social forces. Community may lack tangible substance, but it possesses a gravitational pull, a magnetic existence that creates real effects...” (Brent 2004: 221). This enigmatic ‘pull’ means that much of the identity work undertaken by CC members appears to be “aimed at securing a socially viable identity positioning” in the context of paradoxical tensions (Ghadiri et al. 2015: 597). We thus find a plethora of ‘belonging paradoxes’ where tensions occur “between competing values, roles and memberships” (Smith and Lewis 2011: 387).

In our case study, we find social-identities being drawn from what might be characterised as two over-arching, and competing, sets of values: one from an ethical/community discourse and the other from a business/management-related discourse. Legitimacy is often required to maintain social and business relationships (Atewologun et al. 2016; Watson 2008). Thus, just as Phillips’ (2012: 810) entrepreneurial narrators “draw positively on business and environmental discourses to support their identities”, it is likely that under conditions when equally powerful discourses prevail, actors may not abandon their efforts to participate in both discourse-related social-identities. Yet, when working with social-identities derived from two such hegemonic discourses as those encountered in the CC context, identity work

may become increasingly inconsistent and analytically incoherent. The attendant identity work can become constrained by the hegemonic nature of the underpinning discourses and/or social processes such as interactions with others, including fellow CC members, who confirm or challenge a self-presentation (Phillips 2012).

Discourses can be so “strongly embedded, that they overwhelm any effort that individuals can make to resist them” (Beech 2008: 65). This highlights “the dualities inherent” in organisational member’s accounts of themselves (Clarke et al., 2009: 324). Our findings show that these dualities can result in the construction of self-identities that take a hybrid form that “incorporate[s] difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity” (Young 1995: 26). The CC members accommodate conflict and integrate it into their identity talk as they debate meanings of management/business and weigh them against community and ethical expectations.

A key part of this study has involved reflecting upon the identities that individual co-operative participants construct for themselves and others. In terms of the founder members of the CC, this may be usefully explored via the role-based identities that entrepreneurs enact during pre-start-up, start-up and post-start-up phases. For instance, Fauchart and Gruber (2011) present different social identities for founders of enterprises depending on their motivation. The first of these is classified as Darwinian, where the founder focuses on profit and the accumulation of personal wealth; the second is the Communitarian, where the focus is on the development of their community; and the third is the Missionary where the founder believes they can bring significant change to society. However, as noted by Mathias and Williams (2017), these typologies tend to present entrepreneurial roles as being sequential. Yet this sequential notion can be contrasted with the observation from our study that it appears as though all three identities may co-exist simultaneously. Contrasting and

comparing these individual role identities which have been formed and expressed (Crane and Ruebottom 2011) highlights and confirms the tensions that we find in our CC pub context.

### *Contributions*

Our study set out to critically explore two notions of community in relation to a CC enterprise: what do co-operative members mean by community; and how do notions of community manifest themselves amongst members in the setting of an urban CC pub? Underpinning this exploration, the paper's main contributions have resulted from the use of the lens of identity work to critically unpack some of the paradoxical tensions residing within CCs.

Our ***first contribution*** is to show how community identities can be challenged in processes of categorisation. Brown (2017: 304) notes that “people compare themselves with others on the basis of the memberships of particular social categories, processes which have effective, evaluative and behavioural accompaniments.” In this way, categorising oneself as a participant in a particular organisation can, theoretically at least, lead to perceived similarity to other members, in this case as part of a ‘community’ (see Table 2). However, at points of intersection between different social categories within our case CC (see Table 3), participants may encounter tensions between different social-identities. Paradoxically, they thereby offer self-presentations that are sometimes analytically incoherent yet still relatively stable (as seen in all three of the extended extracts analysed in the paper). This challenging, multi-faceted identity work can be compared to the apparently successful strategic attempts to articulate “a coherent whole” by the environmentalist businesspeople in Phillips’ (2012: 811) study. Despite these tensions, our interviewees’ attempts at ‘belonging’ appear to construct (just as they are also constructed by) an organisational identity for the CC itself that ‘works’. This oscillation between individual and collective levels of identity helps to sustain the



organisation in a manner that allows this entity to bolster whichever notion of community its members wish to embrace.

The tensions we identify between the hegemonic discourses of neoliberal managerialism and democratic collective ownership (see Table 4) are generally conceptualized at the organisational level in studies of community and social economy organisations. Therefore, this paper's **second contribution** is to bring new insights into how these counter-veiling forces manifest in cooperatives, but at the individual level in the construction of social-identities. This matters because, as Rodrigues and Child (2008: 122) note, the study of identity work should pay “attention to the part that is played by social structures, cultures and discourses within which the individual is located”. We have shown that “identity work takes place within the structural arrangement of organisations and the multiplicity of organisational and societal discourses” (McInnes and Corlett 2012: 28). In their self-constructions and erection of symbolic boundaries, CC members appear to identify to significantly varying degrees with the enterprise and its supposed collective values. Their identifications are not always coherent, reflecting the fact view that “identification is not a passive condition but an activity, and that people’s relationships with organisations are rarely well-defined but instead confused, inconsistent and unstable” (Brown 2017: 300).

The ‘collaborative’ organisations studied by Tencati and Zsolnai (2009) have in common democratic ownership structure, organisational goals going beyond the narrow concept of financial bottom line, and a systematic care of the needs of their different stakeholders. Our study shows how collaborative ways of doing business in the case of a CC include such dimensions as expressed in members’ discourse, in particular with regards to their claimed attachment and embeddedness to the local community. Nevertheless, the difficulties faced by CC members (and indeed scholars) in defining ‘community’ manifest in their identity work. Worsley (1987) suggests that community has been used to denote a network of

interrelationships; and in this usage, community relationships can be characterised by conflict as well as by mutuality and reciprocity. Thus our **third contribution** is to the community literature by showing how community enterprises, however they are socially constructed, exist and operate within boundaries which serve to demarcate social membership from non-membership (Jary and Jary 1999). Our finding that such boundaries can exist within an apparently collective organisation addresses Fairbairn's (2004) call for studies that critically scrutinise the tensions in people's attachments to the co-operatives they have joined. We illustrate how these tensions may be negotiated (or indeed elided) when attempts are made in individuals' identity work to live up to normative expectations of CC membership founded on notions of community.

Our **fourth contribution** is in relation to the understanding of identity and business ethics in a CC context. By underpinning our study with an identity work perspective, we have perhaps been guilty of reproducing "everyday preoccupations with securing the self" (Knights and Clarke 2017: 337). However, by contrast with such individualism, these authors "seek a more embodied understanding of identity, where it is a means of building our ethical engagements and capacities for community living" (ibid). Indeed, Knights and Clarke (2017: 340) call for "a more fully embodied and ethically engaged understanding of social relations that would counter the individualistic preoccupation with, and attachment to, identity as a futile and often self-defeating means of rendering the self stable and secure". The current paper, in highlighting the paradoxes inherent in constructing social-identities at the intersection of social categories in a community organisation, and in considering individual, organisational and societal levels, has begun to address this relational aim. In doing so it recognizes the importance, when taking responsibility towards the other, of viewing ethical practice as more of a social issue than an individual one (Dey and Steyaert 2015).

*Future research*

We believe that the rigour of our study indicates that our findings may be transferable to other similar co-operative enterprise contexts (Reinecke et al. 2016). A single case study was purposively chosen in this project because, as Siggelkow (2007) notes “...it is often desirable to choose a particular organization precisely because it is very special in the sense of allowing one to gain certain insights that other organizations would not be able to provide” (pp 20). Nevertheless, having drawn the above conclusions, we should acknowledge that the current study was limited to one type of urban CC organisation. Hence future research should seek to provide in depth case studies from not only further CC pubs, but other forms of consumer co-operatives such as shops. Any further work on CC pubs should also seek to get a balanced view from pubs in both a rural and urban context, from leasehold and freehold establishments, and those at different levels or stages of co-operative development.

Future research with the current case context should also seek to return to the members who took part in these interviews at a later date to provide a more longitudinal assessment of the community and identity aspects at play and to plot whether these develop or change over the life of CC enterprises. In any such studies, in common with this research, it is important to recognise that identity work may be influenced by the research process itself as, “when one interviews people, they tend to ‘do identity work’ before one’s eyes (or ears) and we must be aware that people will tend to appear as more self-conscious and reflective in sociological accounts...than they might be in other circumstances” (Watson and Watson 2012: 701). Additionally, our analysis shows (see Table 3) that a number of the interviewees explicitly position non-members as ‘other’. These others are likely to be consumers who either choose to not become members, are financial restrained so cannot become members, or who are simply unaware of the pub’s CC status. CCs probably cannot rely only on members to consume their products or services to survive. It may therefore be necessary to study how

running an organisation as a consumer co-operative might additionally affect the perceptions and behaviours of non-member consumers, i.e. those that may feel they are notionally 'outside' the cooperative community and include them in future research.

## **Compliance with Ethical Standards**

Ethical approval: All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and/or national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

Informed consent: Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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Table 1: Sample details

<b>Participant number</b>	<b>Board Member? YES/NO</b>	<b>Male/Female</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Length of Interview (minutes: seconds)</b>
1	N	M	35	34:11
2	N	M	62	39:07
3	N	M	75	37:01
4	N	M	69	57:04
5	Y	F	54	37:41
6	N	F	52	53:12
7	N	M	39	55:13
8	N	F	39	77:13
9	N	M	35	52:28
10	Y	M	29	49:55
11	N	M	60	38:09
12	N	M	68	57:12
13	Y	M	56	54:02
14	N	M	55	52:20
15	N	F	46	38:08
16	Y	M	54	57:03
17	Y	M	46	57:08
18	N	M	58	48:01
19	N	F	49	34:07
20	N	M	49	51:06
21	N	M	47	25:13
22	N	F	59	46:19
23	N	M	49	44:15
24	N	M	83	28:24
25	Y	M	51	58:41
26	N	F	49	54:51
27	N	F	70	36:59
28	N	F	47	40:24
29	N	M	71	44:41
30	N	M	66	49:30
31	N	M	61	39:37
32	N	M	48	44:18
33	N	M	37	54:33

34	N	M	56	55:25
35	N	M	56	35:54
36	N	M	50	40:25
37	N	M	48	27:53

Table 2: Community repertoires

Notion of community	Discursive construction	Pattern of use		Exemplar stanzas of talk
		No. of Participants	No. of stanzas	
<i>Community as place</i>	Constructs motivation to join CC as founded on place or the pub's locality	20	35	<p>P10: '...a pub in the community, owned by the community, I don't see why that wouldn't work.'</p> <p>P24: 'The community supports a pub and [Pub Name] should support the surroundings and people in it, yeah.'</p> <p>P23: '...it has a community feel, because you can see all the events that are going on here and elsewhere, and it just feels like it's kind of starting to be more of a hub.'</p>
<i>Community as common interest (preservation)</i>	Constructs motivation to join CC from people sharing the common interest of preserving the pub in its current form	24	43	<p>P8: '...we were, not exactly like a preservation conservation trust, but I think that my perception was we were going to try and retain as much of the character, the clientele, the way that it worked as we could.'</p> <p>P27: '...so long as I have been amongst others who have saved it from any danger, that's enough for me.'</p> <p>P36: 'Members... wanted to save a pub and not see it redeveloped as something else. That was my motivation really and I would think that it's probably the motivation for quite a few other people.'</p>
<i>Community as common interest (anti-corporation)</i>	Constructs motivation to join CC from people sharing the common interest of anti 'big brewery' dominance	22	48	<p>P11: 'I mean pub co's [companies] have got a dreadful name, and quite rightly so, because they're just asset strippers.'</p> <p>P14: I thought this is actually quite a good idea. Because I could see that a brewery or a retail company ...they just, it's a different philosophy...'</p> <p>P20: '...my sympathies have always been, not with the establishment, and I don't mean in a big anti-establishment way, I just mean that big corporate pub chains do as much evil as they do good.'</p>
<i>Community as communion</i>	Constructs motivation to join CC as based on attachment where members may have a sense of shared identity	27	64	<p>P1: 'I think there's a number of people that bought shares because again they wanted to feel, they wanted to be part of a community asset and something that was doing good...'</p> <p>P5: '...if there's some crisis here for whatever reason, I think people are more likely to pull together. I get a lot of feeling when you talk to people that it's us, it's us, you know, there's a feeling of community.'</p> <p>P27: 'They're [P's friends] just interested and impressed generally that there's something like a community pub. ...A sense of social conscience. A sense of wanting the development and cohesion of the community.'</p>

Table 3: Boundary Repertoires

Type of Boundary	Discursive construction	Pattern of use		Exemplar stanzas of talk
		No. of Participants	No. of stanzas	
<i>Boundaries between values</i>	Constructs boundaries within CC membership predicated on different values	16	28	<p>P8: '...you shouldn't have to have the right values and buy from the right organic shops and love incense to be part of [Pub Name].'</p> <p>P22: '...I think, "Oh that's a jolly good idea... (but) all that kind of line of, well, social responsibility's taking it a bit too far". And I suppose... the kind of motivations for lots of other shareholders are much more actively about wanting to have a stake in their community...'</p> <p>P25: '...there was no deep commitment, no kind of revolutionary zeal, which certainly Tom and Dick have I think. Politics for them is their life blood, certainly for Tom ... and that's not the case for me.'</p>
<i>Boundaries between social categories</i>	Constructs boundaries within CC membership predicated on social categories	9	13	<p>P13: 'I was in here the other week and there was like fifteen pregnant women outside drinking, soft drinks like. And I thought, "Oh right, community stuff's going on there".'</p> <p>P27: 'A lot of artisans, sorry, I'd be forced into using that word...'</p> <p>P32: 'I don't think they're people like me, no.... there's a lot of middle class academic people in there and as you can probably tell, I'm just some rough ass builder who comes in and enjoys, you know.'</p>
<i>Boundaries between hierarchies</i>	Constructs boundaries within CC membership predicated on status or board role	13	31	<p>P9: 'I was genuinely concerned that the thing was becoming a little bit, the board was getting pretty divorced from the interests of the members...'</p> <p>P13: 'I think one of the disappointments...is the membership is not as engaged as what we thought they would be. And we've had some things where we can't get them to come and do something or get involved. And it's like us and them at meetings.'</p> <p>P17: 'I think part of the difficulties we had in the first six months is that people thought that we were behaving like a secret society because we weren't communicating very well with the members.'</p>
<i>Boundaries between members and consumers</i>	Constructs boundaries between CC members and non-members	13	18	<p>P9: 'I know people who used to be regular drinkers here who don't come anymore, for a number of reasons. One of them is the fact that they feel that it's a bit too middle class arts and crafts...'</p> <p>P25: 'I think we've lost a few of the traditional clientele who've probably been drinking here for years and years and years, and they've wandered off to other places.'</p>

				P34: 'Now I'm a member of the co-op it kind of adds to that feeling by identification with the place. And you kind of look around and you, I wonder how many of these other people here are actually members of the co-op?'
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Table 4: Discursive Tensions

Type of Tension	Discursive construction	Pattern of use		Exemplar stanzas of talk
		No. of Participants	No. of stanzas	
<i>Need for management</i>	Discursive struggles between running CC under utopian ideals of <i>communitas</i> vs more conventional managerialism	24	61	<p>P1: 'I think some people... who were pressing for justification [behind sacking of bar manager] probably blurred the lines between the right of the shareholder to know the information and the right of the board and the manager's employer and employees to retain some of that privacy.'</p> <p>P7: 'And you think, "Well, no you need to, it needs to be run as a going concern". At times it feels like it's somebody playing with, they've got a pot of money and they can play with it.'</p> <p>P8: 'I know there are, as the board in control they have in certain situations to act and to make decisions but I think the understanding of what a cooperative is and in what situation you'd want a consensus, we probably haven't quite balanced that out.'</p>
<i>Reconciling objectives</i>	Discursive struggles between CC's objectives based on notions of community vs those based on commerce/markets	21	64	<p>P14: '...if you don't have a functional, profitable business, then it all falls apart. And I'm a commercial person. So that's the bit I belong to. The community bit, it's nice to have but I'm, you know, it doesn't do it for, I don't need it.'</p> <p>P18: 'I think that's [i.e. a minimum staff wage] most admirable but I would be worried how that could eat into profits, so it's this balancing act. If you can do it and still keep the level of profit going... then I'm all for it.'</p> <p>P22: '...if it's not able to be a profitable and successful pub then we can't serve any of the other community objectives that there might be.'</p>